

Litr 268R: Italian Cultural History: Food & Wine

John Felice Rome Center

Fall 2024

Sala Addis

Mondays & Wednesdays | 10:30-11:45 am

Instructor: Elizabeth Simari

Email: esimari@luc.edu

Site visits and tastings fee: \$100

All dates are subject to change based on availability at off-site locations

Course Description

In order to learn about Italy and Italian culture together we will examine the country's food and food traditions. By looking at its individual products and different time periods throughout history together we will gain a greater understanding of Italian history and culture. During our semester together, we will use the food and wine of Italy as a way to discover the history of the country and the dramatic changes from Ancient Rome to modern times.

We will gain a greater understanding of how Italian food has been shaped by the history of the country and food is a key for understanding the past and Italy is especially interesting in this respect since modern Italian identity is based, in large part, on food. By learning about individual products and how they are made we can gain insight into Italian culture and history. In a number of tasting experiences, power-point based lectures, discussions, films and one field study we will look at Italian food throughout history and then in more recent times: while also giving a strong grounding in contemporary Italian food culture.

Together we will also study the regional cuisines of the country and more specifically the micro cuisines that exist throughout Italy and the connections they share, examining even further the local food culture of the city of Rome and its historical and cultural significance. The semester will also be punctuated by our study of several raw agricultural products - grapes, wheat, olives, milk - and how and why they are transformed into essential components in the Italian diet: wine, bread, olive oil and cheese. Students will have the opportunity to participate directly in the transformation of these products.

By the end of the course the students will have acquired a more sophisticated understanding of food history as an interdisciplinary approach to studying Italian culture and society and as a frame for analyzing important aspects of Italian history.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students should be able to:

- Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view regarding culinary history
- Gather and interpret information from first-hand sources and scholarly material
- Work with non-traditional historical texts
- Develop a more sophisticated understanding of Italian history through the country's gastronomy
- Identify how food and drink has shaped Italy today

Required Text / Materials

There are no required texts for this course; all required readings will be on Sakai.

Attendance Policy

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy. Prompt attendance, preparation and active participation in course discussions are expected from every student.

- For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two absences.

Absences beyond these will result in 1% lowering of the final course grade, for every absence after the “approved limit”.

Field Study: Wine and Winemaking L’Orto di Alberico

This year on **Saturday, September 21**, students will travel to L’Orto di Alberico, an organic farm and winery, located on the edge of Rome to learn about winemaking. We will spend the day learning the steps from grape to bottle from the winemaker himself and tasting the wines they produce at the winery, run by Alessia Antinori, whose family has been making wine for more than 500 years. Students will participate in the grape harvest and the winemaking process and a light lunch will be served (Via del Fioranello, 34).

*Failure to attend this activity will count as an absence.

Cheese Making Demonstration with La Porta dei Parchi

On **Wednesday, October 23**, students will learn first hand how to make cheese. A staff member from La Porta dei Parchi, a dairy farm in Abruzzo which makes mostly sheep’s milk cheese, will show students the surprisingly simple process of turning milk into curds and whey. Students will take part directly in the process and be able to taste the fresh cheese they have made. *Failure to attend this will count as an absence.

Assessment Components

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| • Participation | 15% |
| • Regional Presentation | 20% |
| • Roman Neighborhood Essay | 20% |
| • Field Study Essay | 20% |
| • Final Exam | 25% |

Class Participation (15%)

For spirited discussion, we will need your active attention and participation. Class participation grades are not automatic. They are based on oral contributions to the collective learning experience of the class. Participation means active engagement in the course: being consistently prepared for class (having carefully read that day’s assignments), asking questions, responding to questions, offering your own insights and opinions, and attentive listening to others. **Laptops and phones are not allowed in class.** Students who are by nature more reluctant to offer their input will not be penalized; however they are encouraged to participate fully in other aspects of the class.

Field Study Essay (20%)

Drawing on their experience at the winery, students are asked to write and research an essay on a topic of their choosing related to their experience at L’Orto di Alberico. Potential topics may include: wine making, the process of fermentation in wine, organic/sustainable farming, family businesses in Italy, the importance of

knowing where our food comes from, etc. These essays will account for 20% of the final grade. More details to follow. Essays are due **Monday, October 7th at 9 am**.

Regional Identities in Italian Cuisine Presentation (20%)

Students will be divided into groups of one or two and will be assigned one of two presentation days (**November 4th and 6th**). Students will be assigned a region of Italy and are asked to present a quick snapshot of your region in terms of its terroir, land, food and wine. Please examine the region's terroir by discussing how the region's geography, natural resources and climate have influenced its traditions. Be sure to include at least three of the region's specialities and their origins.

Roman Neighborhood Essay (20%)

Students are assigned to write an essay on one of the neighborhoods throughout the Eternal City (the Jewish Ghetto, Testaccio, or Esquilino). These essays will account for 20% of the final grade. More details to follow. Essays are due **Wednesday, November 20 at 9 am**.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam is the final step in the sequential learning process the course involves. In this exam you will bring together the various concepts/topics we have studied. The exam will take approximately 120 minutes to complete and is closed book/closed note. It will constitute 25% of the final grade. This is the only time the exam will be given. No alternative exam dates will be offered.

Grading

94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago's guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola's standards here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible to comply with the LUC Student Handbook.

Late or Missed Assignments

Late or missed assignments will not be accepted for grading without the authorization of the instructor. After authorization, late work will incur a 3% percent deduction



Accessibility Accommodations

Students registered with the Student Accessibility Center requiring academic accommodations should contact the Office of the Dean at the John Felice Rome Center, the first week of classes.

Review Session: We will review for the final exam. Students will be divided into groups and give a short five minute review of one of the topics to be covered in the exam. Your performance in these reviews will count in your participation grade. Students are expected to provide a summary/synopsis of what we discussed in class and not read their notes verbatim.

Office Hours: I will be available both before and after class. Alternative times can be arranged but it is always best to make an appointment. We can also be in touch via email if you have difficulties or queries.

Course Schedule

Extra Class Days:

Friday, September 20 – Wednesday schedule

Saturday, September 21 - Field Study Day

WEEK 1

Monday, September 2: Introduction to the Study of Food

Wednesday, September 4: Modern Italian Food Culture

Required Readings: Dickie: 1-10, Parasecoli 257-276

WEEK 2

Monday, September 9: The Food in Ancient Rome

Required readings: Corbier 128-140; Steel 16-17

Wednesday, September 11: The Historical and Cultural Context of Wine: Whites & Library Research Discussion with Librarian Anne Wittrick

Required Reading: D'Agata 279-282

WEEK 3

Monday, September 16: Historical and Cultural Context of Wine: Reds

Required Reading: D'Agata 353-358, Parasecoli 258-259



JOHN FELICE
**ROME
CENTER**

Wednesday, September 18: No class: Papal Audience

Friday, September 20: Field Study prep day

Required readings: Johnson 26-29

Saturday, September 21: FIELD STUDY- Visit to L'Orto di Alberico (Via del Fioranello, 34 Rome)

WEEK 4

Monday, September 23: Somm: Into the Bottle

Wednesday, September 25: The Historical and Cultural Context of Wine - Pairing

Required Reading: D'Agata 111-113

WEEK 5

Monday, September 30: Food Practicum: Bread

Required Readings: Franklin 235-241

Wednesday, October 2: From the Middle Ages to the Columbian Exchange

Required short film: "1492- Globalization and Fusion Cuisines" located on *Kanopy* from LUC Library site

WEEK 6

Monday, October 7: Bee workshop and honey harvest

Field study essay due at 9 am

Wednesday, October 9: Visit to Trionfale Market

Required viewing: TED talk by Carolyn Steel "How food shapes our cities"

WEEK 7: FALL BREAK

WEEK 8

Monday, October 21: The Hot Beverage Revolution: Chocolate, Coffee, Tea

Required readings: Montanari (2009) 90-92, Standage

Wednesday, October 23: Cheese-making Demonstration

Required readings: Firebaugh 359-364

WEEK 9

Monday, October 28: Campus event: Olive harvest

Required readings: Mueller

Wednesday, October 30: Italian Extra Virgin Olive Oil: Process of Production and Culture

WEEK 10

Monday, November 4: Regional Identities in Italian Cuisine Presentation

Wednesday, November 6: Regional Identities in Italian Cuisine Presentation

WEEK 11

Monday, November 11: The Food of Rome and Lazio & Essay idea discussion

Required Reading: Zanini De Vita 5-18, 57-59

Wednesday, November 13: Slow Food Discussion

WEEK 12

Monday, November 18: The Risorgimento and Food: Unity Through a Cookbook

Required Readings: Dickie 211-232

Wednesday, November 20: Mussolini and Futurist Cuisine

Required Readings: Dickie 270-276

Roman neighborhood essay due at 9 am

WEEK 13

Monday, November 25: The Invention of Italian-American Cuisine

Required Readings: Levenstein 75-90

Wednesday, November 27: Final Review + bring your laptops to class to fill out course evaluation

WEEK 14

Monday, December 2: Italian-American food in Big Night (FILM)

Wednesday, December 4: No class (Make up day from winery field study)

WEEK 15: FINAL EXAM

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11 9 AM- 11 AM

Course Bibliography

- Capatti, A., and Massimo Montanari, transl. by Aine O'Healy, *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Corbier, M. "The Broad Bean and the Moray: Social Hierarchies and Food in Rome", in: *Food - A Culinary History*, ed. J.F. Flandrin and M. Montanari (English edition by Albert Sonnenfeld), 128-140. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- D'Agata, I. "Native Wine Grapes of Italy", University of California Press, 2014
- Dickie, J., *Delizia: The epic history of the Italians and their food*. London: Sceptre, 2007.
- Firebaugh, S., "Cheese", in: *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*, ed. S.H. Katz, Vol. 1, 359-364. New York: Thomas Gale 2003.
- Flandrin, J.F. "Introduction: The Early Modern Period", in: *Food—A Culinary History*, ed. J.F. Flandrin and M. Montanari (English edition by Albert Sonnenfeld), 349-373. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Franklin, P., "Bread", in: *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*, ed. S.H. Katz, Vol. 1, 235-241. New York: Thomas Gale 2003.
- Grieco, A.J. "Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy", in: *Food—A Culinary History*, ed. J.F. Flandrin and M. Montanari (English edition by Albert Sonnenfeld), 302-313. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Helstosky, C. *Garlic and Oil: Food and Politics in Italy*. New York: Berg, 2006.
- Laudan, R. "A Plea for Culinary Modernism: Why We Should Love New, Fast, Processed Food," in *Gastronomica* 1.1. (2001), 36-44.



- — “Slow Food: The French Terroir Strategy, and Culinary Modernism. An Essay Review of Carlo Petrini, trans. William McCuaig. *Slow Food: The Case for Taste* (New York: Columbia University Press). *Food, Culture, and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 7. 2. (2004), 133-144.
- Levenstein, H. “The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930” in *Food in The USA: A Reader*, ed. C Counihan, 75-90. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Montanari, M., *The Culture of Food* (The Making of Europe). Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- — “Romans, Barbarians, Christians: The Dawn of European Food Culture” and “Production Structures and Food Systems in the Early Middle Ages” in: *Food—A Culinary History*, ed. J.F. Flandrin and M. Montanari (English edition by Albert Sonnenfeld), 165-177. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- — *Let the Meatballs Rest*. (English edition by Beth Archer Brombert) Columbia University Press, New York: 2009.
- Mueller, T. *Extravirginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2012.
- Parasecoli, F. *Al Dente: The History of Food in Italy*, London: Reaktion Books, 2014.
- Riley, G. *The Oxford Companion to Italian Food*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Zanini De Vita, Oretta. *The Food of Rome and Lazio: History Folklore and Recipes* (English edition by Maureen Fant). Rome: Alphabyte Books, 1994.